



Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

Navigating the Narrows

DO WE WATCH AS WE SHOULD?

AN IMPORTANT INTERVAL

THEY TREMBLED, BUT DID NOT CLEANSE

MEDITATIONS ON THE WORD

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

MY PRAYER

Megiddo Message

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 Kenneth E. Flowerday, Editor

A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

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Have been reading your literature for some months. I find it most interesting since my sincere desire is for the TRUTH.
 Asheville, N. Car. J. S. G.

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am writing to thank you for your comforting MESSAGE. It helps me to carry on since I lost my husband and I am just waiting for the Lord's return.

I thought I should be lonely but when I get your MESSAGE, I know that some one is thinking of me. I received your magazine this morning and what a comfort to know that Christ will come again. It has been many years since we had your first books and we have gone on believing ever since.

I pray God will bless you all in His work.
 Netherton, Worcs., Eng. Mrs. M.

Healing Waters

Dear Brother;

I have always striven to live as a Christian should, and because of this, I am not locally popular, but it does not, in the least, upset me. I realize that I have a job to do and that job has now become a "Progressive" job because I was so very fortunate to come in contact with the Megiddo Mision.

The MESSAGE has helped me along the homeward way and the Bible Lessons, which I am so very thankful and grateful to receive, are a fountain of knowledge continually flowing with the healing waters and cleansing power of God's Word. I am ever striving and looking forward to an endless life which I have to work for, at the end of the road. No one gets salvation at the beginning. Like immortality, it has to be earned. So our greatest ambition should be toward the end, for the prize we wish to receive.

I most implicitly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and all that He taught and promised.
 Auckland, N. Z. R. B. L.

"Every day well spent brings a week of content."

With joy for the toil of Tomorrow
 A day profaned—whatever be gained
 Is just a forerunner of sorrow.

I must not steal the hours of time
 And use them for my own
 I must not waste the hours of time
 Their value is well known.

I must not lose the hours of time
 For they will not return.
 The hours are far too precious
 There is too much to learn.

Navigating the Narrows

IN THE southern part of Russia is an inland body of water called the sea of Azov. About a hundred miles from shore to shore, it lends itself to comfortable and safe navigating. If you were sailing a vessel and should want to enter larger waters, you would have to head your boat through a narrow strait of water called the Straits of Kerch and out again into the broader Black Sea. Should you want wider waters still, your craft would have to move through another neck of water called the Bosphorus, and out into the long and interesting Mediterranean. If your longing should be for really spacious stretches of water and you should wish to sail the broad Atlantic, again you would face the necessity of navigating the narrows, this time the Straits of Gibraltar. And should you want the most endless reaches of ocean to sail, to reach the mighty Pacific, you would have to maneuver the slow and painstaking Panama Canal, or navigate among the reefs and islands of Cape Horn.

While Christ did not use a nautical picture when He spoke of the strait gate and the narrow way that leads to life, I believe He did want us to realize that no larger life is reached except through the narrows of discipline, no great freedom is reached except through the painful course of decision, no broad stretches of usefulness will unfold except through self-denial and duty. To drift along, whether blithely in naive optimism or grimly in abject despair, will open no doors to life. You can keep sailing along on the Sea of Azov, but if you want to move in on the intriguing Mediterranean or the broad Atlantic or the almost endless freedom of the Pacific, you simply must head into and navigate the narrows.

The Narrows of Belief

When the truth of God's Word first reached us we were in darkness, we were held in an enclosure of our own making, in a prison house of darkness. At that time we were "without Christ, being aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2: 12). We were living our own lives in any way that appealed to us, giving no serious thought to whether our ways were right or wrong, trusting blindly in the hope that all would be well in the end whatever our course through life. We were plagued with an attitude of smallness; small interests, small ideals, small goals. Sailing in this small sphere was fairly easy. There were no great sacrifices to make, no harsh decisions to reach, no rough storms to encounter, no strong currents to battle. Nevertheless we were hemmed in by a continuous shore line, we had no place to go.

The fact that we are here at this worship service this morning is an evidence of a longing to sail broader seas. We were not content with the old idea of a God who began working only about six thousand years ago and who was so short of material for His heavenly Kingdom that He was obliged to save all of the human family, irrespective of character. Then the belief that God would condemn all mankind for the sin of our greatest, greatest grandfather, Adam, held us in a strait jacket too confining to

be tolerated or worn with comfort. And the alternative of a Christ dying for us on the cross to undo the harm that Adam had done, seemed an idea too devoid of either depth or breadth, or any sense of justice, to satisfy the inquiring mind. But to get into a larger body of water of enlightened understanding, we must navigate the narrows. We have to change our way of thinking in all our basic beliefs. We have to discard many of the beliefs that we formerly held, we have to search the Scriptures, we have to learn to compare spiritual things with spiritual that we may learn the mind of God. Said Jesus: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." When we have learned the truth, we have taken one step toward freedom of action.

As we navigate these narrows we more fully realize how veritable the statement of Jesus' that the way to life is narrow and difficult to travel, and that only a small minority will choose that way. If community-spirited, the thought of being denied the privilege of going with the masses will need much consideration. Popularity often is a deciding factor with people. Some would feel more secure on the popular side even though they were not at all certain of its future. Hence navigating this narrow may prove a problem.

Freedom of thought is a freedom that is held so dear that over the ages millions of lives have been surrendered to secure or retain it. A noted Frenchman once said: "I wholly disagree with what you say, but I will defend to the death of me your right to say it." But navigating the narrows of restricted belief redirects and controls our thinking. "The thought of foolishness is sin" we find in Prov. 24: 9. And Isaiah, speaking for God, adds: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55: 8, 9). Therefore we cannot believe as we please but must believe according to God's Word, and "speak as the oracles of God."

The charity or love, which endures when human perversions have been swept away like dust, "rejoices in the truth," and no lie can be of the truth. The formula is: "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10: 5). God wants us to believe what He has told us to believe. The natural mind wants to believe what it chooses to believe, and discard what it doesn't care to believe; but God gives us no such freedom of choice. The narrows restricts our belief to only what can be proved by divine evidence: "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." "Let God be true, but every man a liar" (I Thess. 5: 21; Rom. 3: 4). The navigating of these narrows, then, restricts our beliefs to what the God of heaven has said.

Having passed through the first narrows, our ship of life now is sailing on a much broader expanse of water. We are out into the broad stretches of the interesting "Mediterranean" of our spiritual journey; but this does

not free us from problems. We have found the truth that sets us free from the restricted shore line of superstition and darkness, but we have less secure sailing. Much of the time the sea is choppy, and every now and again a Euroclydon storm rages to hazard our journey. Our first voyage through the straits has brought us into a much larger body of water, also greater responsibilities. Knowledge always brings responsibility. Jesus said: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin" (John 15: 22). *Doing* must accompany *knowing*, faith without works is dead. Jesus said again: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13: 17). But doing is not easy, it is contrary to nature. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh," resulting in tempest and conflicts in the mind.

The Narrows of Duty

There are four narrows which every man must navigate if he is to live free and full, and merit a full reward in God's kingdom, just beyond the broad "Pacific" waters of our navigation. The second of these is duty. It would be pleasant if we could avoid traversing these straits. If one could do just as he pleases, satisfying his every whim and caprice, and still live a successful Christian life, or arrive at the desired destination, that would be comforting indeed. But such is impossible. The law of God says: "Thou shalt," and "thou shalt not." It may be painful for the moment to do what duty tells one to do, "but once you have navigated through these narrows you sail out upon waters that are deep and broad and peaceful. Had you refused you would have remained within the petty circle of selfishness and guilt and remorse," as an enemy rather than a friend of God.

Long centuries ago a great king, David of Israel, tried to escape these narrows. His conscience kept tormenting him because of his transgression until it seemed that day and night the hand of God weighed heavily upon him. He had side-stepped duty, and his transgression squeezed all the joy and peace out of his nights and days. "Such is the inner biography of every man who tries to find happiness without going through the passageway of duty." In the familiar hymn, "Faith of our Fathers," this same truth appears in the refrain: "Our fathers, chained in prisons dark, were still in heart and conscience free." They were sailing the broad expanse of the inner Pacific because they had navigated boldly through the narrows of duty.

It usually is easier to side-step our duty than to step manfully up and perform it in whatever way it may come to us. Many times our duty is unpleasant; to fulfill it takes us through a narrow channel.

It is our duty to obey God rather than man. The things man would give us license to do would give us freedom of action, we could do whatsoever is right in our own eyes. But to obey God we must forego all this. The command is: "Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes" (Deut. 12: 8).

It is our duty to judge people by their accomplishments in the divine life, to always give them their just deserts, whether good or ill. But it is often difficult for us to be strictly honest and fair, and as Jesus said, know them "by their fruits." Naturally we would favor the person

we take a liking to, while we would have disfavor for the person we do not like. But such discrimination is denied us when navigating the narrow channel that opens out into the broad expanse of a wholly consecrated life.

The command is: "If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him" (Ex. 23: 5). It would be simple and easy to come to the rescue of our bosom friend when he needed help, but to help a person we do not care for, one whose tastes are different from ours, one whose ways do not appeal to us, is something more difficult. But we should remember that in God's sight that person might have a cleaner record than we ourselves. "For the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (I Sam. 16: 7). It is our duty to look through God's eyes, but the fulfilling of that duty is always difficult.

It is our duty to love our brother, and this love may be shown in any one of a number of different ways. The foregoing definition of love for the brother or neighbor is one of these, but only one, and it is a duty that we cannot leave to another. There are also other forms of love: interest in another's welfare; willingness to share with our brother; longsuffering; willingness to forgive a wrong; little acts of kindness as well as larger ones; Christian consideration. Paul sums it up well in Eph. 4: 31, 32: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Fulfilling our duty demands that we come out from the world and be a separate and peculiar people, that we let "Christian wisdom rule our behavior toward the outside world." We cannot conform to the world in speech, deportment, or dress. We must be wholly different from them, and let our light so shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father which is in heaven. Although living in the midst of a wicked and perverse nation our standard of righteousness cannot be dictated by their concepts of right and wrong, we can not bow to conformity in any way.

It is our duty to go the second mile, to do more than actual duty would demand. If we have done someone a wrong let us be the first to go to that brother and admit that wrong, and not wait for the other person to call our attention to it. There is no better way to get ourselves right with God, but let us not try to deceive ourselves into thinking it will be easy to navigate our ship around this cragged rock in our narrows. It takes much godly humility, and an earnest desire to do right, to admit that we are wrong.

It is our duty to help lift another's cross. None of us liveth unto himself. We each have a daily cross to bear, we each need help, and we each must be ready to help someone else. In place of saying the other person has no cross and trying to minimize his problems let us try to have a sympathetic understanding of his problems. Among our duties none are more restricting than the Golden Rule. To fully obey this rule demands that we put ourselves in our brother's place, that we evaluate our own actions toward him with the same critical eye as we evaluate his actions toward us. It requires that we treat

him in the same way as we ourselves would want to be treated. It is our duty to love as we have been loved.

The Decision Narrows

The third narrows is decision. To make a decision is often a painful thing. Even in trifles we procrastinate, hoping that circumstances may spare us a decision. The more sensitive we are to making blunders the more we may recoil from making a decision between two alternatives, neither one of which is to our liking, and neither one of which looks wholly right. But decide we must, drift is certain to be harmful. To the man of the world who doesn't care to get down to the finer details of right living, the decision may be between the good will of the crowd on one hand, and the right and loneliness on the other. With the student it may be: Shall I cheat in my examinations and pass, or shall I be honest and risk failing a grade? For the man in business: Shall I charge all I can get for my merchandise and services, or shall I be content to live and let live? As an office seeker: Shall I declare my convictions and lose the election, or shall I make glowing if impossible promises to the people and win?

For one who truly loves life there are numerous serious decisions to be made; some great, some small. Before our inception into the Christian way of life there is a vital decision to be made. Jesus Himself stressed the need for carefulness in making this decision. It is to first sit down and count the cost before commencing to build the Christian life. We read: "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. . . . So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14: 28—30, 33). That is a decision of first importance; life and death hang in the balance and there is grave danger that that decision once made, will not unswervingly be retained. The price of being Christ's disciple is that we forsake everything of the world, everything of the flesh, everything of self. Our first flush of interest and zeal for the boon of eternal life may cause us to approach indicated trials from an entirely different angle than we will view them as we actually meet them, and after the novelty of our Christian experience wears off. It was in the aftermath of exploring this possibility that Jesus said: "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt. 24: 13).

One of the first decisions that confronts us as we choose the narrow way is our relationship with our old acquaintances and friends. They are not interested in the same things as we are interested in; how far shall we go in separating ourselves from them? It is often a perplexing decision. Yet the command is plain: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean

thing" (II Cor. 6: 14—17). And Jesus' demand comes even closer home: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10: 37, 38).

Among the smaller decisions to be made by the earnest life-seeker comes such questions as: Shall I change my place of employment in the interest of higher wages, in the face of the danger of more entanglement with the world? and closer confinement, leaving me less time and freedom to assist in the various forms of the Lord's work? I have two acquaintances, one always agrees with me, the other often challenges the virtue of my position. Which one shall I choose as my bosom friend?

Whose advice shall I seek in spiritual matters? How much time can I spend in reading newspapers and news magazines and do it to the glory of God? How far can I go with pleasantries before it becomes a clear case of foolishness, jesting and joking? I find myself watching the pennies, and I know that as a Christian I must practice economy, for all that I have belongs to the Lord, and must be used to His glory; but how far can I carry it before it becomes tightfistedness, or plain stinginess? To answer these questions honestly and in harmony with the Word may prove a difficult narrow to navigate.

We often have to decide between right and wrong, whether to agree with other people rather than incur their displeasure, or disagree with them and hold firmly to what we believe to be the right course with a loss of their favor.

The disciples in the post-Pentecostal period were threatened by the authorities for speaking the Word of God. They had a decision to make, and they made it without hesitancy. Peter and the other apostles answered and said, "We ought to obey God rather than men." And today when the question arises: Shall I obey God and get a cross, or shall I yield to men and get a crown? the answer should be spontaneous, "We ought to obey God rather than men."

Many a time we have yielded to get what we thought was going to be a crown only to discover that it became a cross on which every real joy and happiness of our lives was crucified. And on the other hand we have discovered that in taking up the cross of self-denial we have secured an inner peace which all the wealth of the world could not buy. The joy and peace that is ours as the result of a day spent doing *as we ought* so far exceeds the satisfaction of a day spent doing *as we please*, that there is no comparison.

It takes seamanship to pilot our ship head-on into the straits of an honest, unalterable decision for that which is right, but there is no other way to secure that inward peace that passeth understanding, or lay up for ourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that we "may lay hold on eternal life." Only by navigating these narrows can we sail the broader expanses of expanded usefulness in God's service, or float with Christ and the good and faithful of all ages upon the ocean of eternity enjoying bliss forevermore.

Through the Narrows of Discipline

The fourth narrows is discipline. If ever we are to sail the open seas of a greatly expanded usefulness in God's service, or learn to walk in all the commandments and

ordinances of the Lord, blameless, we first must submit to discipline. No Christian leader can accomplish the maximum good in helping others until he first has learned to rule himself. In the Epistle to Titus, first bishop of the Church at Crete, Paul carefully spelled out the duties of a Christian bishop: "For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Tit. 1: 7—9). There has been no slackening of the Lord's demand for quality in leadership since the days of King David, when He said: "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."

"No runner ever won the hundred-yard dash, amid the applause of a thousand voices, without a long and tedious period of discipline. The ease and freedom of a brilliant piano or other music performance is the finished mastery of years of discipline most of it tedious, exacting, and uninteresting. Whenever you find a man free from prejudice and bigotry," humbly fulfilling his duty, governed by the highest principles of Christian morality, you may be sure he was not born with those superior qualities. He is the product of discipline, and "you can be sure that this freedom has come from a life-long habit of intelligent faithfulness to the thousand details of truth."

Discipline demands repetition, the doing of the same things over and over again until they become second nature. It is to become accustomed to doing good. And that brings maturity in the divine life: "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5: 14).

As a nation we Americans are an undisciplined people. So much can be done by the pushing of a button or the turning of a switch, that we have almost lost the necessity for skills. This may be a technological gain unless we are misled by it to believe that character too can be attained without effort, by whim, like turning a faucet. Someone has remarked that many people believe religion should be like an escalator, effortlessly lifting one to a higher plane of godly living. But that cannot be. Broader sailing comes as the result of navigating the narrows, and life in the world to come is the end result of a watchful passage through the strait, difficult, gate and a careful ploughing the waves of the narrow restricted way, following in the course of our blessed Master who carefully sailed these same narrows before us.

A thoroughly honest man is the product of a lifetime of vigilant training and effort in one direction. Reverence of mind and heart can be traced back to chubby hands folded in prayer at a God-fearing mother's knee, up through youthful years of habitual instruction in right principles drawn from the Scriptures, and on into adult life which many times a day faces God in thankfulness and praise. It is the result of repeated impressions of God's greatness, His goodness, the absolute certainty of His existence and omnipresence, the keen realization that "wherever we are, or whatever we do, we cannot hide from God," we cannot escape His all-seeing eye, for "the eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good."

The motto, *Rules For Today*, often seen hanging in Christian homes, should prove a great aid to a disciplined life:

"Do nothing that you would not like to be doing when Jesus comes,
Go to no place where you would not like to be found when Jesus comes,
Say nothing that you would not like to be saying when Jesus comes."

The Glorious Reward

In navigating the narrows of Christian development we have been actuated by purely selfish motives. We have done so because we believed we could get greater returns for our effort than we could possibly get in any other way, and that is just what God wants us to do. "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (I Tim. 4: 16). First save thyself, and then them that hear thee. A case where selfishness is justifiable. The narrows are the only connecting passage to the broader expanse of waters, the ocean of eternity filled with boundless pleasure. The narrows, like the strait gate and narrow way, lead to life; life wholly without pain, sorrow, disappointment, fatigue, or any of the problems that beset us today; rather it will be life abundant, secure, happiness-filled, unending.

We did not diligently apply ourselves to the command, "study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth," merely to satisfy our thirst for religious knowledge. We were convinced that Wisdom held in her left hand riches and honor, and in her right hand length of days to enjoy them in. We did not exchange error for truth simply to satisfy an ideal that we would "rather be right than have a million dollars," we realized that only God's truth could set us free from the fetters of mortality and bring life, and we wanted life. We wanted to sail the broadest expanses, and to gain this we submitted to a restriction in our thinking, limiting our beliefs to the things God had caused to be written for our learning.

We navigate the narrows of *duty*, not for the thrill that comes from the realization of useful work well done. Faithfulness to duty may be its own reward in a limited way, but not *the* reward. Almost the closing words of the Bible are: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22: 14). They that do His commandments, shall sail to the endless reaches of God's mighty ocean of pleasure.

We are careful about the *decisions* we make in our temporal affairs, not merely to keep ourselves out of the toils of the law, or to preserve our good name in our community; not merely to keep in the good graces of the brotherhood, not merely for the thrill of doing right, but to navigate the broader expanses of a life that will never end. We remember the words of the beloved John: "And this is the promise which he hath promised us, even eternal life," and we want that life.

We submit to the narrows of *discipline*, not because of a harrassing inferiority complex, not because we want to escape the effort of having to work out a suitable life pattern for ourselves. We did not accept of discipline, pass through the Straits of Gibraltar, merely to sail the more spacious Atlantic. Increased service for God, increased interest in the welfare of our brother, a higher standard of moral excellence, are sufficiently worthy

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They Trembled, but did not Cleanse

THIS THOUGHT is derived from the words of James (2: 19, 20), "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"

Many there be in this curious world to whom religion is a mere "storm cellar," a last resort in trouble—and for the duration only. It is true that the Truth is described as "a covert from the tempest," but it is far more than that. It is a field in which the faithful labor through the long, hot hours of daylight, and the shelter it provides is a part of the reward for that labor. It is not difficult to turn to God when there is no other place to turn, but such a course is as ignoble as it is unsafe. The Eternal has stated plainly that if His appeals are neglected when skies are bright, their last minute cries for favor will be unheard above the roar of the storm.

We have all known of men and women who repented when laid low by illness, vowing great things if their lives were spared; but few and far between are those who after recovery remember and fulfill those vows. Remorse comes easily, but repentance involves a change in the manner of life, which is not attained on the deathbed, and rarely acquired through fear. It requires conformity with the words of the Psalmist (66: 13, 14), "I will pay thee my vows, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble."

Then there are those who, facing no emergency, hear the Word and are superficially convinced thereby, but not deeply convicted. They see the forces of the argument; they feel a desire for the rewards so glowingly pictured; they become vaguely aware of their own unsatisfactory state before God. But the proposition is too stark, too tremendous; the accumulation of habit too great. This new thing calls for too much—too much of everything. We read that when Paul, standing a prisoner before the Roman governor, "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." The wily Roman had learned by long experience that time heals all things, even quieting the stirrings of a long dormant conscience. Tomorrow his old indolent self would be in command again.

Still others are like that Archbishop who was tremendously fat. Some days he surveyed his bulk ruefully; but the distress of remorse was less poignant than the distress of fasting. This is the attitude which gives rise to the vicious circle of sin and confess, sin and confess, and never forsake.

It is very easy to keep the demands of the spirit at a minimum, thereby releasing more energy for the satisfaction of the flesh.

This moral laziness, this self-deception and temporizing, can become a way of life that will bind us with an unbreakable chain. There will come a time, and it may be closer to us individually than we think, when we can no longer respond to the call of a loving God, even if our mind consents. Habit will have so thoroughly enmeshed us that we can no more change our way of life than the Ethiopian can change his skin, or the leopard his spots. "After this the Judgment." Remorse there will be in abundance then, but no place for repentance.

My Goal

I wonder—

Which is really me:
The person I am at times,
Or the one I strive to be?

I strive to be more humble,
More forgiving and more kind;
I want an all-enduring heart
And an understanding mind.

I want to solve my problems
With a conscience sweet and clear—
For then I'll know a peace of soul
Unknown to strife or fear.

Let nothing gross or mean or small
Be my sweet endeavor—
Oh, let the real me seek the goal
Of godliness—forever!



Place a four-inch plank across the floor, and anyone can walk along it without any difficulty whatever. But place the same plank above the street, from the top of two high buildings, and hardly a man can be found who can walk across it. What is the difference? The plank is the same, the muscles are the same, the mind is the same, the will is the same. The difference is that when the plank is on the floor, we are thinking only of walking across. When the plank is suspended in the air, we are thinking more about falling off, and that it would be as the prophet Job states, "The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me." You cannot make progress toward your goal while in a whirlpool of negative thinking.

Of course no one ever won a victory by underestimating his difficulties, or by overrating his abilities. Knowledge of the facts is an indispensable factor in success. But the ideal will become the real. So think victory and act victory to ultimately gain victory.

"If"

If I can dry one tear today,
Hold back one soul that wants to stray,
Or show to one the higher way,
My life will fuller be.

If I can speak one soothing word,
Inspire a talent yet unstirred,
Or check some sentence best unheard,
My life will fuller be.

If I can spare of my scant store,
A mite to cheer some life more poor,
If some lost hope I can restore,
My life will fuller be.

There are sweet surprises awaiting many a humble soul, fighting against odds in the battle of a seemingly commonplace life.—Sel.

"When you stop to think, don't forget to start again."

An Important Interval

THREE IS a time to be born, and a time to die" says Solomon and it is the precept of a very wise man; but between these two times there is an interval of infinite importance.

It is a period of time that is precious and we have no right to waste it. Time is the stuff life is made of; and to the majority of mankind, life is of great value; they shrink from the thought of its cessation. They do their utmost to carry out the law of self-preservation, as is recorded in Job 2:4, "All that a man hath will he give for his life." Millions of dollars and years of study and research are being spent to find ways and means to prolong life. Much success has crowned the effort; but no man can eliminate the shadow of death hovering over every earthly hope. Time takes its toll as we go on towards age. It taxes our health, our faculties, our features, and robs us of our strength. Life with its unreturning hours is ever narrowing the gap between the beginning and the end of this important interval.

The mighty Creator has offered a wonderful reward to those who realize the value of this time and are willing to use it wholly in His service. He has promised to all such a glorious pain-free, eternal existence, continually to increase in strength and wisdom through the endless cycles of eternity.

God in His mercy has provided the way to endless life to escape the ravages of time. This glorious way which will lead to a land where we will never grow old; to a paradise of delight where time in its flight will not be counted by years. What a priceless heritage awaits those who choose to use this important interval in preparation for a higher service in the eternal progress beyond. They shall be joint-heirs with Christ to all the Father's boundless stores of every known and unknown priceless blessing.

Time whose tooth gnaws away everything else is powerless against the "Truth of the Lord." For the glorious principles of Truth will some day subdue the wilderness of sin that surrounds us. The power of God's law to transform and elevate is boundless, limited only by our unwillingness to cooperate. If we are willing to fight against the evil of our natures, God will be with us for our Captain. More dear in the sight of God and His angels than any other conquest, is the conquest of him who labors to subdue self. "Of all music which reaches farthest into heaven, it is the beating of a truly loving heart." We catch a glimpse of the compassion of a Father through the words of a beloved apostle, "I have no greater joy than to hear my children walk in truth." "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him."

In the natural it is easy to become enthused over big pay. And should we not become enthused over the pay our heavenly Father has offered? for no greater reward could be offered than an endless life in the midst of beauty and glory, beyond the ability of the human mind to comprehend.

Down through the centuries God has been calling through the words of the prophets, Jesus and the apostles to come into this way of Truth and be saved from the

power of death and the grave. Above the tumult of an unheeding world, we hear the prophet Isaiah, "Come my people, enter into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." "Flee out of the midst of Babylon, . . . be not cut off in her iniquity" says Jeremiah. Jesus echoes the warning, "Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." The great Apostle adds a glorious promise with the same warning. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

These testimonies reveal that to be worthy to share in the promised inheritance of a son or daughter of our heavenly Father, we must now learn to live in the world, but not be a part of it. To be able to stand this test, everyone who aspires to be a member of this royal family must use the means God has provided for Christian training. His Word is a guide, and the example of His beloved Son to follow. Jesus lived in a corrupt world, for which He refused even to pray; yet He lived above its corruption and called back to His followers, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

We have been called to walk in this way of Truth in the most important interval of time in the history of God's people. A time when we must walk solely by faith. We are in the closing hours of Gentile times when there will be no visible manifestation of God's power; but a greater reward has been offered for those who will acquire this virtue by obedience to His Word. This Word is a thorough furnisher unto all good works and will reveal all the fleshly imperfections that must be overcome to have a pure heart in God's sight. And to the "pure in heart" is the promise of audience with the Almighty God.

The clock of the centuries points to the eleventh hour of this day of salvation. However, God is still calling to come out from a world rapidly going to destruction, and serve Him with a perfect heart and a willing mind.

We find ourselves living in a world where iniquity is coming in like a flood. The darkness and confusion of human affairs are without parallel. Unbelief and indifference to God and His divine laws are increasing. The existing conditions in the world today are just as the divinely inspired writers long ago foretold they would be. The evidence of fulfilled prophecy speaks in no uncertain tones that the time is near when God will send His beloved Son to reward everyone according to the work he has done during this important interval of time.

Jesus challenged young and old alike to consider what it would profit, if they were to gain the whole world and in the getting and grasping, lose their own soul. The interval of time allotted to us is short, only a moment of time in comparison to God's count of time, just a tick on the clock of eternity. It is important for us to now use all our energies to free ourselves from the shackles of sin and self.

Navigating the Narrows

(Continued from page 6)

ambitions to attract a man who appreciates virtue; however they are not great enough incentives to impel a man to go the whole way. Our aim is to be able to navigate the broad Pacific, to be made equal to the angels so we can never die. Salvation is the highest goal in the Christian's life, and the only incentive strong enough to lead a reasoning man or woman to renounce everything of the flesh, to take up his or her cross daily and die with Christ to the rudiments of the world; to pass his or her sojourn here in the fear of doing wrong; to have no confidence in the flesh or surrender to any of its bewitching desires. It was for the joy set before Jesus that He endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now sitting at the right hand of His Father, and it is hope of a full reward that will urge us on to make a full and complete surrender.

We navigate the narrows with the hope that some day we can pilot our ship into a much broader expanse of waters. The patriarch Job speaks of it as a strait contrasted with a broad place. "Even so would he have removed thee out of the strait into a broad place, where there is no straitness." And Paul refers to it as light afflictions, versus glory: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." And again in picturing the grand climax he said: "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

Therefore, beloved brethren, let us be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, mindful of His holy commandments for "IN KEEPING OF THEM THERE IS GREAT REWARD."



Now

If there's love within your heart,
Say it now.

If a truth you could impart,
Say it now.

All the world needs love and cheer,
Just a smile may dry a tear,
Or a word may lessen fear:
Say it now!

If a kind act comes your way,
Do it now.

Not tomorrow, but today;
Do it now.

For the days pass swiftly—yet
What we might do—we forget,
Then remembering—regret!
Do it now!

Love and kindness cost us naught,
Give it now.

Words of praise, a loving thought,
Give it now.

As we go along life's way,
Let us share the good we may—
For we only have today!
Give it now!

Do We Watch as We Should?

OUR SUBJECT is one from which all can receive personal profit. We have all been guilty of doing and saying things without proper forethought. We have not always watched as we should. Many times we have not been as wise as the little children who are always asking "Why?" We go ahead and act without questioning whether it is right or wrong.

It takes constant vigilance at all times to recognize the dangers of our own particular position. In this day and age, with the spirit of indifference and unbelief so rampant, watchfulness is of the utmost importance. There is great danger that through long familiarity with the Word we let it become commonplace. As a matter of fact, like many modern blessings, we regard it as a necessity and fail to look upon it with new wonder and appreciation each day.

The question should be, Are we letting God's truth fulfill its holy mission in our lives? Are we alert to make and keep it the driving force of our existence, or does it occupy simply the back seat? In other words, is it just an outward ornament, or are we letting it get into our blood stream, changing our nature, thereby making us over into new creatures?

If humility, patience and consideration for others flows spontaneously forth in our weekday words and actions, we shall indeed have to be on the watch.

The tongue is but a small member, but it calls for the greatest amount of watching. We often say things in haste which we promptly forget, but which leave an impression on another, leading him down. By dropping that mean, hateful or careless word we may cause another great sorrow. Do we try to put another's behavior in the right light? Oh, with what carefulness we must watch to see that we speak to help someone on! We can drop kind words which will build up and encourage others, cause the weak to become stronger and cause all to press harder for the prize.

Phillips' translation of a passage in Romans is very striking: "So let us concentrate on the things which make for harmony, and on the growth of one another's character. Our actions should mean the good of others—should help them to build up their characters. If we must be critical, let us be critical of our own conduct and see that we do nothing to make a brother stumble or fall" (14: 19; 15: 2; 14: 13). By watchfulness on our part, what an influence for good we can be!

The golden moments pass with the swiftness of an arrow; let us not waste the precious time, but watch every moment. We need not have that day come upon us unawares if we heed the words of our Master, "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."

*In all I think or speak or do,
Whatever way my steps are bent,
God shape and keep me strong and true,
Courageous, cheerful and content.*

You cannot run away from a weakness; you must sometime fight it out or perish, and if that be so why not now and where you stand?—Selected.

Meditations

On the Word

"He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak . . . He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself . . . And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god" (Isaiah 44: 14, 16, 17).

On the surface, this passage seems to be describing the behavior of a very primitive human being—a savage of the rudest type, such as one does not see in these days. *Homo Neanderthalensis*, perhaps. The satisfaction of his physical wants occupies all his time, and with this he is perfectly content. But trouble comes, or danger threatens. Perhaps a tempest shakes the forest, or the stealthy approach of enemies is heard. Now he goes out to the tree he has hacked down with his stone axe, the tree which has warmed him and cooked his food, and from what is left of it, not yet turned into firelogs, or traps, or supports for the hut which houses him, and with "the residue thereof," the cast off, the thrown aside, the leftover, "he maketh a god."

Fear forces him to make a god. Through fear—not reason or gratitude—he becomes religious. His religion is a remnant, the unused remnant; and to it he appeals for protection from his fears. In our comfortable homes we smile condescendingly, thankful that such things no longer happen, at least in our "civilized" country.

Or do they?

Here is a man who has for years known the way of Truth. He may be one who pays lip service to the doctrine, while making no personal profession; he may be a follower of the Way, but retarded by lukewarmness or stubbornness. In his heart he knows full well what he ought to do; but pride, or stubbornness, or lack of faith, or one of many other reasons, delays his surrender. Year after year he resists the call of God.

Suddenly his sky darkens. Perhaps his own life or health is endangered by disease or accident; perhaps it is his wife or child who now lies at the point of death; perhaps it is merely financial ruin which threatens. And in agony of soul he cries, "Lord, deliver me! Only take away this affliction, and I will serve Thee as long as I live, with all that I have and am!" He promises God anything now—he who has given God nothing hitherto. "And the residue thereof he maketh a god."

Where is the great difference between your savage and your "civilized" man?

We have also seen, too many times repeated, the follow-up, the sequel to such a repentance. Granted that occasionally the course of a life is changed by the resolution of an emergency, the path of "distress religion" is thickly strewn with forgotten vows and broken promises. The Pharaoh who relented under the plagues and hardened his heart when they were removed was not the first or the last of his kind.

If there is anything Jesus especially stressed, it is that

religion is not a part of life, but the all. To devote the residue of anything to God, whether it be of tree, or time, or talents, is to make religion a mockery. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all"—not the loose change, nor the left overs, not the remnant, not the fag-end, but with "all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12: 30).

It is easy for us to see and deplore the universal hypocrisy in the practice of "remnant religion" in the nominal churches; but before judging others in the matter, let us judge ourselves. This thing applies to us all, at every turn of the road, in every act of life. We say, "God First." Perhaps we see it daily in a motto on our bedroom wall. But the extent of our consecration is proved by many things—by the company we seek and enjoy, by the way we spend our money and our time, by the sort of reading matter we pick up first, by the sort of music we play from choice. Do we put off our religious duties until everything else is done? Do we wait for the convenient season, or until circumstances are just right? Do we day-dream about the great things we would like to do for God and humanity, waiting, waiting, not seeing the work and needs close at hand? Do we find an excuse for leaving the unpleasant duties for the other fellow? In short, are we really giving our best, our all? If not, who are we to smile at the cave man who with "the residue . . . maketh a god"?

True religion is the life of God in man, filling him, thrilling him, pulsating through him. True religion says every morning, "Not today for self or business, but for God first"—all the deeds and words and spirit of life weighed and assayed in the light of Truth. Not the last hours, or the convenient hours of life, but all the hours of life must be God's. We should be as ashamed to offer Him the broken, frayed, ragged end as to give a valued friend a secondhand, battered, marred birthday present.

But suppose the greater part of your life is already in the past, and a few remaining years is all you have to give—the little end of life? Then give it, speedily and without reserve; it is your all, and more than this can no man give. The time past, in which we had no certain knowledge of good and evil, is never held against us. The only time that matters is *now*—and from now on.

It is an advantage to have known the Way from our youth, but this gives us no assurance of salvation, but rather an added responsibility. Where much is given, much is required, and life is stewardship. Early teaching and training gives us no such head-start that we have a moment to loiter by the way, to dilute our religion with the pleasures of this life. Another may well take our crown.

The time is surely coming when trouble, real trouble (Dan. 12: 1), will drive men to their knees. If already found in that humble condition, we have hope. But if driven there by fear of the spreading judgments of the Eternal, if frantically offering the residue of a life which has wasted its opportunities, we shall find ourselves in the sad condition described in Proverbs 1: 24—28.

"Because I have called, and ye refused; . . . ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: . . . When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me."

Questions and Answers



Is the use of wine permissible?

We learn in Acts that after Jesus ascended to heaven He came back and put Paul into the ministry, giving him a message to deliver to the Gentiles. This great Apostle shunned not to declare all the counsel of God, as we are informed in Acts 20:27, therefore we are safe in relying upon his counsel.

In writing to Timothy, his "dearly beloved son" in the faith, he admonished him, "Use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" (I Tim. 5:22). Notice, it is only a *little wine*, and that for often infirmities; not to be used as a beverage but for medicine for *often infirmities*.

The "stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" are closely linked, not to be separated in any case. That was the mind of Paul as instructed by Jesus, therefore we are of the same mind as we are commanded to be in I Cor. 1:10. We have the right to do as Jesus through Paul allowed, use a *little wine* for our often infirmities, unless by so doing we should be tempted to go beyond the prescribed amount and arouse a taste for liquor as a stimulant or a beverage.

Were we disposed to any such weakness, we should flee from temptation and not even taste that which might lead into transgression, even though we should have often infirmities. Many have died a drunkard's terrible death because they failed to heed the warning to "taste not."

Did Jesus drink wine?

We have no account that the Master ever had any infirmities for which He would require the use of wine; but were such the case, we can be assured that He certainly would have used that which He sanctioned others using.

Did the miracle of Jesus' turning the water into wine as related in John 2:1-11, show that He approved of intoxicating drink?

Jesus went to the marriage feast for but one purpose, knowing that an opportunity had afforded itself to manifest forth His glory and to demonstrate the power bestowed upon Him by the Father; also to confirm the truths He was proclaiming. He understood a law by which He could change the water into wine without going through the slow process of nature; that is, producing the grapes from which wine normally would be produced. This miracle caused His disciples to believe on Him, this being the beginning of His ministry, and that was His object in performing the miracle.

This wine which Jesus miraculously produced from the water was not necessarily intoxicating. We read that it was common in Palestine to keep separate the juice which first exuded from the pressure of the ripe fruit in the wine-press before the treading began. This juice was considered very choice and was kept in an unfermented state.

"In the New Testament the character of the 'sweet wine,' noticed in Acts 2:13, calls for some little remark," states the Bible Dictionary. "It could not be *new wine* in the proper sense of the term, inasmuch as about eight months must have elapsed between the vintage and the

feast of Pentecost. The explanations of the ancient lexicographers rather lead us to infer that its luscious qualities were due, not to its being recently made, but to its being produced from the very purest juice of the grape. . . . It is very likely that new wine was preserved in the state of 'must' [unfermented] by placing it in jars or bottles and then burying it in the earth."

This is most likely the kind of wine that was furnished in the miracle. There is one point of which we can be reasonably certain: Jesus would never produce a drink that would intoxicate those partaking of it.

What is Bible Temperance?

Saint Paul gives a clear explanation of the term in I Cor. 10:31, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." The man or woman who obeys this command is practicing Bible temperance. The Apostle gives another example of temperance in I Cor. 9:24-27. He says: "Know ye not that they which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

True Bible temperance is to keep under the body and bring it into subjection; that is, rule self and do all to the glory of God. It is plainly expressed in Proverbs 16:32, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." Bible temperance covers more than simply refraining from intoxicants; it means a consecrated life, devoted to the service of God.

I would like to ask, Who is the "Adam" of I Tim. 2:14, was it Christ? It seems to me it would have to be.

The text in question reads: "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in transgression."

Christ is the second Adam. He never was deceived by the promptings of the flesh. He never transgressed the law of God after knowing it. But the "woman," composed of all covenant-makers, the ones from whom the true Church or "Bride" will ultimately be selected, have stumbled many times, even after knowing better.

In the Genesis narrative the serpent deceived the woman, the woman deceived the man, and the man allowed himself to be deceived; but it must be noted that the curse fell with equal severity upon the man and the woman, hence the transgression must have been equal. Both the unfaithful man and the unfaithful woman, symbolic of the unfaithful covenant-makers, collectively, have been in transgression.

"Be a good loser, but don't make it a habit."

My Prayer

*"Just to go singing through the days, O Father,
Whether those days hold happiness or dread;
Just to go singing, through the storm and sunshine,
Singing though only darkness lies ahead!
Just to go singing, whether flower fragrance
Or chilling snowflakes fill the waiting air,
Just to go singing down through life, O Father—
This is my prayer!"*

*"Just to go singing—although fear and sorrow
Walk by my side, and try to touch my hand,
Just to go singing, even though the pathway
That I must tread lies in a cruel land—
Just to go singing down to seas of sadness.
Just to go singing up despair's grim slope;
Just to go singing on through life, O Father,
This is my hope!"*

*"Just to go singing, though the song comes briefly
Out of a soul that holds its share of pain;
Just to go singing, though I know that heartache,
Biding its time, will meet with me again.
Just to go singing, with my chin uplifted,
Keeping my gaze above each doubt and care—
Just to go singing, till earth's clouds have drifted,
This is my prayer!"*

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